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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Koordination in VN-Friedensmissionen – Eine theoriegeleitete Herangehensweise

Die Koordination zwischen verschiedenen Einheiten des Systems der Vereinten Nationen (VN) hat in den letzten Jahren sowohl für Praktiker als auch für Akademiker zunehmend an Bedeutung gewonnen. Da die Vereinten Nationen immer ambitioniertere Aufgaben der Konfliktnachsorge, der Demokratisierung und des Wiederaufbaus in Krisenregionen übernehmen, wird der Ruf nach einem koordinierten Vorgehen immer lauter – denn keine einzelne VN Unterorganisation kann die Fülle der Aufgaben allein bewältigen. Trotzdem haben die Bemühungen der letzten Jahre hin zu mehr Koordination und Integration bisher nicht die erhofften Ergebnisse gezeigt. Dieses Papier möchte zur aktuellen Debatte beisteuern, indem es zuerst das Thema „Koordination" von einem theoretischen Blickwinkel aus beleuchtet. Basierend auf den Erkenntnissen der Organisationslehre wird ein theoretisches Modell der Koordination entwickelt – dieses wird dann auf die Vereinten Nationen als Unternehmer von Friedensmissionen angewandt. Haupterkenntnis ist hierbei, dass, um interorganisationelle Koordination innerhalb der Vereinten Nationen zu verbessern, die sozialen und strukturellen Koordinationsmechanismen gestärkt werden sollten, die dem netzwerkartigen Charakter des Systems entsprechen – anstatt weiterhin zu versuchen, über das ganze System hinweg eine straffe Hierarchie durchzusetzen.

Schlagworte: Koordination, Multidimensionalität, Organisationslehre, Friedenssicherung

ABSTRACT

Coordination in United Nations Peacebuilding—A Theory-Guided Approach

Coordination between different United Nations (UN) departments, funds, agencies, and programmes has become an issue of increasing concern for scholars and practitioners alike. With the United Nations taking on ever more ambitious roles in countries emerging from conflict, no single unit or agency can master the task of post-conflict reconstruction, also known as peacebuilding, alone; instead, a concerted effort is called for. Recent efforts at reorganizing the way the United Nations works in peacebuilding missions have not yielded the desired results of achieving a more coherent, and in that way more efficient and more effective UN presence. In order to offer fresh inputs for the debate, this paper looks at the issue of coordination from a theoretical perspective. Informed by organization theory, a framework for interorganizational coordination is developed and then applied to the United Nations and peacebuilding. The main finding is that in order to improve interorganizational coordination and in lieu of trying to become one streamlined hierarchical organization, the United Nations should acknowledge its network character and cultivate those social and structural control mechanisms which facilitate coordination in networks.

Keywords: coordination, multidimensionality, organization theory, peacebuilding

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

International interventions in inter- and intrastate conflicts have experienced a marked proliferation since the end of the Cold War. This holds true especially for interventions under United Nations (UN) auspices—be they UN-operated or UN-mandated operations. As of 31 October 2006, there were roughly 81 000 uniformed personnel and roughly 16 000 civilian personnel deployed in 16 UN peacekeeping missions worldwide.[1]

These operations have not only increased in number; they have also been deployed under more adverse conditions, with more robust and more far-reaching mandates. Thus, what had become "traditional UN peacekeeping" during the Cold War has more recently been replaced by what is now known as "peace enforcement," "nation building," "peace building," and the like.

Traditional peacekeeping forces were deployed to interposition themselves between formerly warring parties and to monitor a ceasefire. Deployment was conditional upon consent of the parties, and peacekeepers were allowed to use force only in self-defense. Today, peace enforcement occurs when the Security Council authorizes a multilateral force to intervene and actually take sides in a conflict not yet settled. Here, force can be used in order to achieve a military aim. Peacebuilding, state-building, or nation-building (different countries and organizations use different terms) describes what is supposed to follow a military campaign: the practice of trying to establish structures in a previously conflict-ridden territory, which allow for the establishment of sustainable peace, even after international forces and civilian workers have left. Especially noteworthy here is the fact that, with peacebuilding, the military aspect of interventions has become supplemented by civil tasks such as economic reconstruction and development as well as administrative reform.[2] More specifically, in a UN internal effort to systematize what the different departments, agencies, funds, and programmes contribute to peacebuilding, activities are grouped in the following four broad categories: (1) security and public order, (2) justice and

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1 Background note, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, 31 October 2006, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm>, last checked 4 January 2007.

2 This was outlined explicitly in then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali's "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations," A/50/60-A/1995/1, 3 January 1995.

reconciliation, (3) governance and participation, and (4) socioeconomic well-being.

The increase of multilateral interventions both in number and in scope has lead to an abundance of literature on the subject, emanating from universities and other research institutions, think tanks, as well as from the organizations involved themselves. Whereas in the early days of the "new interventionism," most authors' main concern was the lawfulness or the desirability of an apparent paradigm shift from upholding the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference to upholding individual human rights,[3] a large body of literature now deals with the practical difficulties of intervention, ranging across a wide selection of issues. Faults or areas in need of improvement have been identified at almost every stage of UN peacekeeping or peacebuilding missions. The list is long. Concerning mission objectives, criticism points to lack of transparency and/or lack of alignment between political rhetoric and the reality of political will.[4] Concerning operations, the deficits emphasized were the duration of time until full deployment, the troops' lack of interoperability, and inadequate logistical support.[5] Concerning personnel, references have been made to a lack of regional/cultural knowledge and sensitivity,[6] and insufficient coordination among actors in the field.[7]

Especially since the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations ("Brahimi report")[8] has the issue of how different parts of the UN system can best be brought to work in concert, become a major concern both at the UN as well as in the relevant think tanks and research institutions. The Brahimi report states, for example, that "effective peacebuilding also requires a focal point to coordinate the many different activities that building peace entails."[9] Thus, both Brahimi's recommendation to deploy "integrated missions" to the field as well as the general question of UN system-wide coordination have been

3 See, for example, de Jonge Oudraat 2000; Chesterman 2001.

4 Gow 1997; Connaughton 2001.

5 Berdal 1996; Chesterman 2004.

6 Pouligny 2005.

7 Berdal 1996; Sommers 2000.

8 "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

9 Ibid., §44.

subject to in-depth evaluations[10] and have triggered various reform efforts at the UN, among the latest of which have been the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office. The recent High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence has not explicitly tackled peacebuilding, but many of its findings and recommendations can apply to peacebuilding nevertheless.[11]

The issue of better coordination in peace operations has now also been taken up by UN member states. The Norwegian government, for instance, following up on findings and recommendations presented in the Eide report,[12] has launched a project entitled "Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations"—a multi-conference, multi-stakeholder dialogue—in order to draw lessons and gather political support for better coordination in peacekeeping/peacebuilding. Thus, the issue of coordination is a timely one and one of high political relevance, not least to the populations of those countries in which UN peace operations are currently ongoing or likely to start soon.

Despite the wide-ranging interest in the subject of coordination in peacebuilding—and despite its importance—analyses and recommendations to date have taken a fairly narrow perspective. The great majority of the peacebuilding literature consists either of in-depth case studies of particular missions, edited volumes comprising different in-depth case studies and some generalizable lessons,[13] or volumes expanding on specific themes (coordination being one of them—others being, for instance, accountability or local ownership), again drawing examples from a variety of case studies.[14] In general, hardly any ventures have been undertaken into related disciplines which could inform the peacebuilding dialogue in various aspects. For example, although many of the shortcomings identified are, arguably, management problems (leadership, communication, accountability, etc.), few insights have been taken from other disciplines that can offer detailed theoretical knowledge about these issues.[15]

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10 See, for example, Durch et al. 2003 and Eide et al. 2005 on integrated missions; see Jones 2002 and Cutillo 2006 on UN coordination.

11 "Delivering as One—Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-Wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment," A/61/583, 20 November 2006.

12 Eide et al. 2005.

13 For a comprehensive compendium, see, for example, Stedman et al. 2002.

14 See, for example, Caplan 2005.

15 Notable exceptions here are, for example, a project by the Global Public Policy Institute

As a result, literature on coordination as well as policies to improve it are limited in their analyses and consequently in their recommendations. Roberts and Bradley, for example, find that "much of the basis of the UN's coordination problem appears to stem from a self-limiting view of peace operations as a choice between two extreme alternatives: an ad hoc bottom-up approach or a top-down approach to organizing."[16] The ad hoc approach here can also be called "coordination by default" and the top-down approach "coordination by command." Both have been tried in the field, but they have either not solved the coordination problem to a satisfactory degree or they have generated a whole new set of issues and problems such as the question of conflicting objectives of different types of international involvement.[17] In the scholarly literature, there are a limited number of papers which seek to transfer lessons from other disciplines onto peacebuilding, but by the authors' own admissions, these remain "initial" or "preliminary" efforts.[18]

This paper seeks to go further. The aim is to inform the current debate and efforts revolving around the issues of coordination (or, as also used in the literature and the policy dialogue, "integration," "coherence," or "alignment") by exploring coordination first in an abstract, theoretical way and then to transfer insights onto United Nations peacebuilding.

What is coordination? What are prerequisites for it? In which ways can coordination occur or be undertaken, and what influences that? These questions will first be investigated through the lens of organization theory; for, as the title of Robert's and Bradley's paper, "Organizing for Peace Operations," suggests, *how* to organize the work of different organizations in countries emerging from conflict is what currently occupies practitioners and scholars alike. Organizing here is seen as a question of management—issues like structure and processes, roles and tasks, and incentives and sanctions in multidimensional peace operations need to be discussed.

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on organizational learning and peacebuilding and a project by the University of Konstanz on administrative science and peacekeeping.

16 Roberts and Bradley 2005, p. 127.

17 In the current debate, the issue of whether or how to combine political and humanitarian objectives ranges among the most prevalent contentious issues.

18 Seyboldt 2001; Lipson 2005; Roberts and Bradley 2005; Paris 2006.

It is proposed that organization theory can offer tangible insights for the topic of coordination—both intra- and interorganizational—and that, by transferring these onto problems in UN peacebuilding, new answers can be derived with regards to why coordination has been difficult in the past and what can be done to remove some of these difficulties. United Nations peacebuilding will be evaluated against insights from organization theory; some preliminary conclusions with regards to reasons and remedies of unsuccessful coordination efforts will be offered.

The paper is organized in five parts. The following section (section two) will explain in more detail how the topic of coordination is framed in organization theory. Three basic organization forms—hierarchies, markets, and networks—and their concurrent coordination mechanisms will be discussed. In the third section, a further level of detail will be reached by proposing a coherent model on how coordination works in networks. In the fourth section, by transferring some of the insights from network theory onto UN peacebuilding, a first set of general implications for the UN will be explored. The last section will sum up the main findings of the paper as well as propose some initial ideas on how coordination could be improved.

ORGANIZATION THEORY

Organization theory is the result of the academic study of organizations and its constituents. It considers individual and group dynamics in an organizational setting, as well as the nature of the organizations themselves. The advent of organization theory as an academic discipline is generally traced back to the industrial revolution of the 19th century and to the concurrent beginning of scientific management, or Taylorism (after its most renowned proponent, Frederick Winslow Taylor).[19] Scientific management sought to describe how, in a (business) organization, work should be broken down into its basic tasks and then reassembled again, and how organizational units and individuals should be assigned to these tasks in order to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in production. According to the scientific management school, the main elements of an organization are thus the organizational units which are responsible for

19 Taylor 1911.

different tasks and the ties that link these units together, usually by some form of communication. Coexistent specialization—i.e., the breaking down of the production process and the assignment of workers accordingly—and coordination (sometimes also termed integration)—i.e., the reconnecting of the various intermediate products—are among the essential characteristics of an organization; therefore, they are obviously among the main subjects of inquiry of organization theory.

Even though organization theory has undergone many permutations and has brought forward many "spin-offs" since its origins in the 19th century, interpretation of the term coordination has been fairly constant in the organization theory context. Coordination is thus the act of bringing different elements in a system into alignment. Provan and Milward describe this as follows: "Through coordination, an integrated system supposedly minimizes duplication of services by multiple provider agencies while increasing the probability that all essential services are provided somewhere in the system and that clients will have access to these needed services."[20]

Hierarchies, Markets and Networks as Basic Organization Forms

Organization theory distinguishes between three basic organization forms: hierarchies, markets, and networks.[21] A discussion of coordination cannot take place without referring to the organizational form within which this coordination is supposed to take place; choosing a particular organization form, as a consequence, means that the set of available coordination mechanisms is limited. The three ideal types and concurrent coordination mechanisms are briefly sketched below.[22] Obviously, there is an abundance of hybrid organization forms in reality, and different forms of coordination mechanisms can coexist. For conceptual clarity, however, it makes sense to consider the abstract, ideal types first.

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20 Provan and Milward 1995, p. 3.

21 Originally, organization theory differentiated between markets and hierarchies only, and for some time, it was debated whether a network existed merely as a hybrid form between market and hierarchy, or whether it had distinct, standalone qualities. Powell argued strongly for the latter, and it has by now become standard practice to refer to markets, hierarchies, and networks as the three basic types. See Powell 1990.

22 For a good synthesis, see also Powell 1990; Thompson 2003, chapter 2.

A hierarchy (sometimes also called a bureaucracy)[23] consists of one organization. Modern day organizations usually offer a range of products or services—this is the purpose of the organization. A characteristic element of a hierarchical organization is that it features differentiation both according to functional tasks and capabilities (horizontal differentiation) as well as according to command and control (vertical differentiation). Functional differentiation ensures that specialization can occur: not everybody in the organization carries out the same tasks but everybody carries out those tasks for which he/she has a certain expertise, knowledge, or disposition, for example. People with the same functional expertise are grouped in the same functional unit. Functionally distinct units on the same hierarchical level are brought into alignment by a common superior. This can happen either through direct personal interaction or via impersonal means such as procedural rules, role descriptions, predetermined actions, plans, etc.[24] The latter is possible because hierarchies are suitable for transactions (or processes in general) which happen repeatedly. These transactions or processes can be standardized, and rules according to which these tasks ought to be carried out can be specified in advance.

This "impersonalization of coordination" makes a hierarchy a very efficient type of organization: in most instances, coordination does not have to be brought about actively because the rules are laid down in a way so as to guarantee a coordinated outcome. Should uncertainty regarding the proper course of action nonetheless occur, the superior has the authority and the power to (re)direct the units in a way that he/she sees fit. In this way, uncertainty or conflict can be resolved.

The same features that make hierarchies efficient, however, can also make them relatively static, slow at adjusting to external shocks, and possibly detached from the environment in which they operate. Predetermined rules don't leave space for experimentation and innovation, and orders from above may be ill-informed.[25]

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23 In organization theory, hierarchy and bureaucracy are sometimes used interchangeably. This differs from Max Weber's definition, who characterized bureaucracy, considering it to be a special case of hierarchy, namely, hierarchy legitimated by rational-legal competence. See Weber 1919.

24 Van de Ven et al. 1976.

25 In the private sector, many companies have responded to this pitfall by delegating

Juxtaposed with the hierarchical form of organization is a market which encompasses an indeterminable number of organizations. Each organization creates its own product or service; functional differentiation now becomes important *between* organizations, rather than within a single organization (although intra-institutional differentiation, of course, continues to exist). Linkages between the organizations only form for the time that a transaction is performed across organizational boundaries, i.e., whenever a product or service is exchanged between two organizations. Thus, ex ante uncoordinated individual activities are brought into order by the "invisible hand" of the price mechanism: a price for a given good or service is agreed upon and the transaction carried out. Because in this idealized form of the market, there is no one who actively links together the transaction partners and no one who influences their agreement, coordination is primarily a result—a non-purposeful outcome of the rules of the market.[26] If no agreement is reached, this prompts at least one of the partners to completely withdraw from the transaction—exit is the standard response in this case.[27]

The third ideal organizational form known by organization theory is the network. Diagnosing and describing a network requires that one observes interactions between organizations over a period of time. A network exists when organizations, though independent, repeatedly transact with one another and thus form permanent, albeit loose ties. These connections between organizations may have been established initially to complete one particular, market-like, transaction; over time, however, personal relations and perhaps even IT- or capital-related relations may have been added, thereby contributing to the durability of the tie.[28] A network of organizations now exists to which each organization contributes its particular product or service to the output of the entire network. In the car manufacturing industry, for example, there are many suppliers which manufacture individual parts or systems for the automobile; the

authority downwards—some so much so that they have in fact become network-like organizations. See, for example, Hedlund 1986; Bartlett and Goshal 1990; Snow et al. 1992.

26 Thompson 2003, p. 38.

27 For an in depth account of options in organizational decline, see Hirshman 1970.

28 Sydow and Windeler 1994.

end product "car" is the product of a network consisting of the chief manufacturing company and many suppliers and subcontractors.

Compared to hierarchies, networks have a more flexible make-up: some organizations may participate in the network for a certain amount of time and then leave again, or the other organizations may decide not to interact with them anymore. For a prolonged period of time, however, the network holds together despite the fact that it lacks "a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during various transactions."[29] The network endures because individual organizations' goals (profit maximization in the private sector) are aligned with the goal of the network,[30] and because networks have their own ways, for example, of resolving such disputes.

One could say that networks persistently experience both centrifugal and centralizing forces. Networks may seek to overcome coordination difficulties or outright conflict by installing a hierarchical element. Organizations would forgo some of their independence in order to gain efficiency, heeding, as it were, the centralizing force. At the same time, coordination difficulties or conflict—centrifugal forces—could become so severe that the network breaks apart. The result would be a collection of disconnected organizations as in a market.[31] Because of this coexistence of opposing forces, networks have an inherent instability that needs to be managed in a specific way. Sydow and Windeler assert: "Networks operate on a logic of exchange that is very different from both the logic of markets and hierarchies, not least with respect to how this logic combines cooperative and competitive elements, autonomy and dependence, trust and control."[32]

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29 Podolny and Page 1998, p. 59.

30 Sydow defines this as follows: "Ein Unternehmensnetzwerk stellt eine auf die Realisierung von Wettbewerbsvorteilen zielende Organisationsform ökonomischer Aktivitäten dar, die sich durch komplex reziproke, eher kooperative denn kompetitive und relativ stabile Beziehungen zwischen rechtlich selbständigen, wirtschaftlich jedoch zumeist unabhängigen Unternehmen auszeichnet" Sydow 1992, p. 79. *"The business network represents an organizational form of economic activity designed to secure competitive advantage, which is characterized by complex, reciprocal, more cooperative than competitive, relatively stable relations between legally autonomous and, for the most part, economically independent enterprises"* (author's translation).

31 Park and Ungson 2001.

32 Sydow and Windeler 1998, p. 267.

The delicate equilibrium of the network is maintained mainly by mechanisms of social control, which will be discussed in detail in section three. For the time being, it should suffice to say that once network partners maintain longer-term relations with one another, transactions become "structurally embedded" in these social relations.[33] Network partners not only have the information about one another's organization captured in the price data of their products or services; over time, they also get to know something about one another's expertise, working style and professionalism, and perhaps even about individual capabilities, resources, and constraints. This enables mechanisms of social control such as reputation or organizational culture to govern the network. As a result, problems among the participants are dealt with by mechanisms of voice (renegotiations, adjustments, and the like) rather than exit (the problem-coping mechanism in markets) or command (the ultimate problem-coping mechanism in hierarchies).

Determinants of Organization Forms

One set of questions that organization theorists have considered extensively has to do with the choice of organization form. What determines which actions and transactions are carried out within one organization (i.e., a hierarchy), and what determines what happens across organizations (i.e., in a market or a network)? Which organizational form is most suitable in which kind of environment? Transaction cost economics (TCE) is one of the main schools in organization theory, which has dealt extensively with these questions.[34]

The central proposition of TCE is that an organization's purpose is to facilitate transactions between different units at the lowest possible transaction cost. Transactions can be exchanges of goods and services, information, or resources, for example. TCE holds that the nature of the goods being exchanged, the frequency of the exchange, the complexity of the environment, and the

33 Granovetter (1985) actually holds that "all human attempts at purposive action are … embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations" (p. 487). He intended his work as a critique of pure transaction cost economists like Oliver Williamson, for example, who would deny such embeddedness for market transactions.

34 Initial thoughts regarding these questions were put forward by R. H. Coase in 1937; the most prominent proponent of transaction cost economics today is Oliver E. Williamson. See, for example, Williamson 1967, 1981a, 1981b.

character of the exchange partners all determine which organizational form is most suitable.

To go into the details of TCE would go beyond the scope of this paper. For present purposes, it should suffice to state that, according to TCE, one-off transactions in which the subject of exchange is easily quantified and valued are best carried out in a market, because the market is the most efficient forum in this case. In contrast, repeated transactions and transactions of goods which are more difficult to specify or more intangible are best carried out within one organization, i.e., within a hierarchy. Because of opportunism, market transactions entail not only search but also monitoring costs; these increase the more "fuzzy" the nature of the transaction becomes. For such transactions, a hierarchy (bureaucracy) is more suitable because "the rules in a bureaucracy minimize the need for continual, close inspection of the exchange in order to ensure that neither party cheats the other because both parties in the transaction have common investments in the bureaucracy governing the transaction."[35]

With regards to networks, Powell states that "the open-ended quality of networks is most useful when resources are variable and the environment uncertain."[36] He states that "commodities whose value is not easily measured" such as "know-how, technological capability, a particular approach or style of production, a spirit of innovation or experimentation" can be exchanged very well within networks.[37] Ness and Brechin, alluding to a network, similarly contend that "under conditions of high heterogeneity and instability, organizational performance is enhanced by flat functional divisions of labor, which are linked together by specific integrative mechanisms."[38]

That said, Powell and others see motives other than the minimization of transaction costs as the main explanatory variables for the development of networks. Powell, for example, acknowledges that network forms of organization can sometimes entail comparatively high transaction costs, but he maintains that these are mitigated by other clear advantages the network has vis-à-vis

35 Ulrich and Barney 1984, p. 473.

36 Powell 1990, p. 322.

37 Powell 1990, p. 304.

38 Ness and Brechin 1988, p. 254.

markets and hierarchies in certain environments.[39] He holds, for example, that networks are more flexible than hierarchies, and therefore adapt to changing circumstances better. Being independent, individual units do not need to wait for orders from above to adjust their behavior. At the same time, however, a mutual orientation and "the entangling strings of reputation, friendship, interdependence, and altruism"[40] ensure that the network units still move in the same direction and take the others into account when altering their course.

Others emphasize that the exchange of tacit knowledge and the commitment to joint problem-solving in networks foster organizational learning and make networked organizations more innovative than their competitors.[41] According to Thompson, "tacit knowledge is that which cannot be explicitly codified but which rests in implicit personal or institutional practices. … Tacit knowledge cannot be written down or copied."[42]

Networks are well-suited fora for exchanging tacit knowledge, because "information passed through networks is "thicker" than information obtained in the market, and "freer" than communicated in a hierarchy."[43] Uzzi's example, the concept of style in the fashion industry, illustrates this nicely: It is very difficult and time-consuming to accurately describe a particular style by referring to only components such as color, garment, cut, and the like; some information is also bound to get lost. However, when network partners know each other well and have been working together for some time, they can convey easily what they are looking for by referring to a particular style, even if this is "more implied than overtly expressed."[44] The exchange and mutual understanding of tacit knowledge allows network partners over time to get to know, understand, and forecast the other's behavior better; and such learning gives them a competitive edge over other organizations.

Nevertheless, should problems arise, organizations in a well-functioning network resort to joint problem-solving arrangements. These are "routines of

39 Powell 1990, pp. 322-327.

40 Ibid., p. 303-304.

41 Uzzi 1997; Podolny and Page 1998.

42 Thompson 2006, p. 11.

43 Powell 1990, p. 304.

44 Uzzi 1997, p. 45.

negotiation and mutual adjustment that flexibly resolve problems."[45] In contrast to what would happen in a market—namely, that one or all organizations would simply resign from the transaction—networked organizations respond by working things out together, i.e., by using mechanisms of voice. The achievement of a goal is more important than the completion of the transaction according to previously specified parameters: when a problem with the parameters occurs, mutual adjustment or renegotiation takes place. Joint problem-solving arrangements minimize costs because investments made before the problem occurred are not lost (thereby becoming sunk costs), but can be rescued by working out a different solution. Again, joint problem-solving arrangements also contribute to organizational learning, because network partners get instant feedback regarding the suitability and desirability of their actions—something that would be lost if a tie were quickly severed upon the emergence of a problem.

The Network as the Most Suitable Model for UN Peacebuilding

From the description of the basic organizational forms and the conditions under which they strive, as well as from some deliberations presented in chapter three, it becomes apparent that the network is the most appropriate subject of enquiry regarding coordination in UN peacebuilding for a number of reasons. These can broadly be grouped into the categories "what is" and "what should be." In other words, I would like to argue here that, on the one hand, the UN peacebuilding machinery looks most like a network and, on the other, it should function like a network given the demands of the peacebuilding context and the advantages networks have vis-à-vis other organizational forms according to TCE.[46] Consequently, the coordination in networks should be further investigated.

The network presents itself as the appropriate model, first, from a structural perspective. The collective of United Nations departments, funds, programmes, and specialized agencies that is involved in peacebuilding missions comes most closely to a network in terms of its basic make-up: It consists of a number of organizations that enjoy varying degrees of independence vis-à-vis

45 Ibid., p. 47.

46 Similar deliberations have also been proposed by Ness and Brechin. See Ness and Brechin 1988.

the United Nations system. The specialized agencies, for example, are legally independent international organizations with their own rules, membership, organs, and financial resources. Some existed as early as before World War I; some were created by the United Nations themselves to meet emerging needs. Each agency is brought into relationship with the United Nations by a negotiated agreement. The funds and programmes, on the other hand, are subordinate to the United Nations but under the immediate supervision of their own intergovernmental bodies; they derive most of their financial resources from means other than the UN budgets and, as a result, they also enjoy some degree of independence.[47]

The number of peacebuilding organizations that belong to the UN system is limited (even if more UN agencies are involved in peace operations today than probably were in the early peacekeeping days). And the make-up of the peacebuilding network is malleable, varying from one mission to the next and perhaps even within missions over time, as different organizations may take part in different missions, and roles assumed may differ accordingly, both across and within missions. Thus, one can assume that organizations of the UN system enjoy relationships with one another that endure over time, but that these relationships are nevertheless more flexible than they would be in a hierarchy.

Second, it seems that a network would actually be the most suitable form for coordinating the different UN entities in a peacebuilding effort. Practically every observer agrees that the conditions under which peacebuilding is supposed to take place are highly complex and fast changing, requiring quick learning and adaptation, and that the tasks to be performed jointly and the goals to be achieved are often fairly intangible—for example, the strengthening of civil society or the institutionalization of democracy.[48] In peacebuilding, the UN operates under conditions "of high heterogeneity and instability" and therefore, arguably, needs "flat functional divisions of labor [and] special integrative mechanisms"[49]; but many assert that these are currently not in place. Jones, for

47 For further information see the website of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination of the United Nations System at <http://unsystemceb.org>, last checked on 11 January 2007.

48 Newman and Rich 2004.

49 Ness and Brechin 1988, p. 254.

example, asks provocatively: "Are the policy coordination tools developed in the 1990s flexible and nuanced enough to provide credible options in the face of real-world variety in context?" His answer is "clearly no."[50] And Haas, albeit in a slightly different context, labels what had been designed to be "interlocking institutions" as "inter*block*ing institutions" instead.[51] Other practitioners and scholars have actually already called attention to more network-like approaches in international organizations, but they have not specified the concept of the network further, nor exactly how this should play out in international organizations.[52] As early as 1997, Jessica Tuchman Matthews exclaims in her renowned article "Power Shift":

> In drastically lowering the costs of communication, consultation, and coordination, [information technologies] favor decentralized networks over other modes of organization. In a network, individuals or groups link for joint action without building a physical or formal institutional presence. … Governments, on the other hand, are quintessential hierarchies, wedded to an organizational form incompatible with all that the new technologies make possible.[53]

Third, it seems plausible that a peacebuilding network will be the most appropriate model in the field in terms of important considerations other than coordination.[54] It has already been mentioned, for example, that networks are more nimble, that is, that they respond to changing circumstances better than hierarchies. Networks also learn quicker and are more innovative, especially in knowledge-based fields. Hierarchies, on the other hand, are susceptible to lock-in and strong organizational couplings, which place a heavy burden on the different units because they prevent innovation and make the organization rigid.[55] Some peacebuilding practitioners note that, in peacebuilding, too much concern for formal coordination structures may sometimes have the opposite, detrimental effect, namely, that staff neglect their actual tasks and spend too

50 Jones in Donini et al. 2004, p. 216.

51 Haas 2002.

52 See, for example, Tuchman Matthews 1997; Reinicke and Deng 2000; Ruggie 2003.

53 Tuchman Matthews 1997.

54 Admittedly, this is not yet confirmed nor disproved—practitioners have not yet explicitly focused on the network as a model in peacebuilding. True, some form of network-like structures have probably emerged in every mission, but it can be argued that these have not yet been set up, developed and evaluated systematically.

55 Thompson 2003.

much time coordinating with others. What is more, because one is so busy coordinating, he/she does not even realize that important work is left undone. One observer here warned: "People can talk themselves into a mindset at these [coordination] fora, without actually doing [their work]."[56] A network with its largely informal structure may therefore be better suited to enabling effective work.

It is also reasonable to expect that a network-like mission will cope better with the issue of local ownership than a hierarchy would. As mentioned earlier, the question of how an international presence with wide-ranging administrative powers is supposed to engender buy-in from the local population and build capacity such that the structures it establishes are sustainable is one that constantly engages scholars and practitioners.[57] A hierarchy here may be unsuitable, because it can be perceived as a closed system which subsumes all necessary functions within its boundaries. Of the three models of organization, the hierarchy is the most autarkic system; people in hierarchies have a greater predisposition to be inward-looking and, consequently, they do not look beyond the organizational boundaries of that system for information or other inputs. A hierarchical peacebuilding organization arguably, therefore, runs the risk of remaining closed off from the population it is supposed to serve and neglecting the structures it is supposed to build simply because of the lack of any incentive to do otherwise. Pouligny, for example, attributes to the staffs of international organizations and NGOs an attitude of being the most important actors in the peacebuilding process—a stance which she criticizes.[58]

One result of this attitude and corresponding behavior can be that the UN builds parallel structures in the countries where it operates; because of the higher profile it has and the better salaries it pays, it often depletes those structures that do exist locally and, in that way, it undermines the building up of sustainable, local administrations. The lack of sustainability can perhaps be seen most vividly when buildings that had previously been occupied or even built for the UN are left empty after the UN leaves.[59] A more nimble network with its

56 Author's interview.

57 See, for example, Caplan 2004; Chesterman 2004; Chesterman forthcoming.

58 Pouligny 2005.

59 Author's interview.

outward rather than inward focus might be more attune to taking into account and incorporating local structures. Chesterman, too, finds it "disingenuous … to assert that a successful transitional administration requires both centralized control in the hands of a well-resourced special representative *and* ownership on the part of the local population."[60]

Finally, one could argue that the concept of a fully-integrated, hierarchical international presence would be misplaced on ideological grounds as well. Stockton makes a very vivid case here, highlighting the contradictions inherent in current international thinking and practice. Even though he focuses on development, his conclusions can arguably be applied to the peacebuilding endeavor as a whole:

> One of the great conundrums of the modern international aid system is that it lionizes strategic planning, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, and frowns upon overt expressions of independence and organizational competitiveness. Yet paradoxically, "developmentalism," in theory at least, is the champion of diversity, innovation, tolerance, economic competitiveness, and political, social, and cultural pluralism. Indeed, contemporary civil society is supposed to be a manifestation, even a celebration of the triumph of these liberal societal values over the stultifying hand of state socialism with its overblown five-year strategic plans, and "development" dealt out project by inefficient project, a simulacrum of which is oddly still adhered to by the international aid system.[61]

In the end, some potential caveats remain. Even if the network fits best in terms of structure, environment, and task, there may be some disparities between a supposed UN network and the business networks, which gave rise to the concurrent observations and precepts in organization theory. One is the fact that the collection of UN agencies is not as much an organically grown network as networks observed elsewhere are; this may have implications for the dynamism of the social control mechanisms for coordination. The other is the fact that incentives for UN agencies to participate in a network may not be as immediate as they are for business organizations: whereas business organizations supposedly have direct economic benefits such as access to information and mitigation of resource dependencies from network participation, this may not be as tangible for UN agencies. As one practitioner noted, "in a bureaucratic structure, the

60 Chesterman 2004, p. 143.

61 Stockton cited in Donini et al. 2004, pp. 29-30.

bottom line is not so clear."[62] A full discussion of how this may become important has to be postponed at this point, but these caveats should nevertheless be kept in mind when trying to transfer insights from network theory onto the issue of coordination in peacebuilding. For now, it must suffice to consider how coordination and conflict resolution are achieved in networks, and—particularly important for the transferability of insights—what the prerequisites for this are. As these are mechanisms that are meant to achieve purposeful outcomes, they are subsumed under the term "network governance."[63]

COORDINATION IN NETWORKS

Prerequisites for network governance

For the social control mechanisms of network governance to function, certain prerequisites have to be satisfied. Although implied in the descriptions of ideal network forms, these are hardly ever mentioned explicitly in the literature. It can only be presumed here that this is the case because they can be regarded as certainties in the (business) context in which most network theory is situated—were the prerequisites not fulfilled, a network would not have formed. However, because the same kind of organic growth cannot be entirely assumed for the "UN network," those prerequisites should be stated explicitly, because they will become important later for coordination via social control mechanisms at the UN.

First, it should be noted that organizations in a network share an overall goal. To achieve this goal jointly is why they participate in the network in the first place, and what each organization can be held accountable for. The vision of a common goal to which each organization contributes helps to align and, if necessary, discipline participating organizations.

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62 Author's interview.

63 Thompson (2003, p. 37) defines this as follows: "By coordination we mean that the elements in the system are somehow brought into an alignment, considered and act together. By governance we mean the regulation of these elements; the effectiveness of the reproduction of their alignment and coordination. […] At the 'coordination end' we have processes that simply bring together elements into an ordered pattern, but not necessarily by intent of design—non-purposeful outcomes. At the other 'governance end' we have mechanisms that overtly order and govern by direction and design—'purposeful outcomes'."

Second, each organization contributes its particular expertise towards this common goal, meaning that there is functional differentiation across the network. Some relation must certainly exist between the organizations and some familiarity with one another's output; there may even be some overlap in areas of operation. But what makes the network strong (at least under specific circumstances) is that it draws on individual organizations' proficiencies to produce something that one organization could not produce alone, at least not as efficiently and effectively. This is also an incentive for each organization to cultivate its relations to other network members: each organization is aware of the interdependence that results from functional differentiation.

Third, the network has to maintain its ties, i.e., the relationships that exist between the organizations. In its most basic form, these ties resemble channels across which information and resources are exchanged between organizations. Ties are also important because, in order for social control mechanisms to work, information needs to be relayed throughout the network: if nothing about an organization's performance were known, for example, other organizations could not draw the appropriate consequences, be they positive or negative.

Finally, it is reasonable to assume that employees in networks need to have somewhat different qualities than employees in hierarchical organizations. This holds true especially for network managers and "boundary spanners," i.e. those employees who direct individual network units or organizations and those who bridge the gaps between them[64] (individual employees can certainly have overlapping functions here). For example, the significance of communication for the proper functioning of network governance means that a large proportion of network employees must be great communicators. They must filter, process, and relay information throughout the network; they must enjoy the exchange with other people and organizations, and actively engage in this task. Furthermore, because of the relative independence of the individual units, employees in network organizations must be capable of strategic thinking and handling. Because of the expectation that such persons perform without constant supervision and detailed orders from above, they need to be self-propelled and take

64 "Boundary spanners" operate at the periphery of an organization and fulfill two main functions: one, they filter and relay information about the environment to the organization; and, two, they represent the organization to the outside. See, for example, Leifer and Delbecq 1978; Aldrich and Herker 1977.

initiative, all the time keeping in mind the goals and well-being of the entire network. Hedlund foresees this as early as 1986; among other things, he proposes that network managers must have the following skills:

- aptitude for searching and combining elements in new ways,
- skill in communicating ideas and rapidly turning them into action,
- willingness to take risks and experiment,
- "faith" in the company and its activities,
- honesty and personal integrity.[65]

Thus, a common goal, functional differentiation, information (and possibly other resources) flow, and appropriate personnel are highlighted here as the prerequisites for network governance.

Network Governance: Social Control Elements

As outlined above, coordination and conflict resolution in networks are exercised via social control, i.e. via mechanisms of voice. This is possible because transactions in a network are structurally embedded.[66] According to Jones et al.:

> Network governance involves a select, persistent and structured set of autonomous firms (as well as non-profit agencies) engaged in creating products or services based on implicit and open-ended contracts to adapt to environmental contingencies and to coordinate and safeguard exchanges. These contracts are socially, not legally, binding.[67]

As with the other topics in organization theory, there is an extensive body of literature that tackles specific aspects of network governance, and these works are sometimes not easily reconciled.[68] Nevertheless, some general themes emerge, which are detailed below. Furthermore, the attempt has been made to order them in such a way that the relations between the different elements of network governance become clear. Admittedly, this is probably not the only possible way to achieve this, but it is among the first such comprehensive efforts to disentangle and organize the different elements of network governance.

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65 Hedlund 1986, pp. 29-32.

66 Granovetter 1985; Uzzi 1997.

67 Jones et al. 1997, p. 914.

68 See, for example, Snow et al. 1992; Jones et al., 1997; Uzzi 1997; Sydow and Windeler 2000; Thompson 2003.

As outlined above, network governance must both coordinate network partners as well as safeguard exchanges between them; in that way, centralizing and centrifugal forces in the network are dealt with. Accordingly, there are mechanisms that fulfill the first role, and mechanisms that fulfill the latter—some fulfill both. Jones et al. identify reputation and collective sanctions as mechanisms for safeguarding exchanges and organizational culture as a mechanism for coordination. Access restriction, the fourth mechanism, serves both purposes.[69]

Access restriction means limiting the number of organizations that can participate in the network. According to Powell, "by establishing enduring patterns of repeat trading, networks restrict access."[70] Organizations in a network first and foremost interact with one another; thus, the total number of organizations is limited.

Having a limited number of organizations in a network safeguards exchanges, first, because it limits the amount of monitoring (of other organizations) one organization must do. There is only a finite number of organizations to be monitored, thus each one can be monitored more easily. Second, when there are a limited number of organizations that can interact with one another, each organization knows that it finds itself in a situation of "repeated games": the chance that it will deal with the same organization again is highly likely. This "shadow of the future" increases the incentive to cooperate and behave faultlessly or, conversely, decreases the incentive to shirk and seek short-term instead of long-term profit. Third, having fewer partners who interact more often increases the social embeddedness of interactions: organizations that interact with one another get to know each other better; they understand the other's motives and reasons for behaving a certain way, they can more easily find common ground, and they perceive their respective interests as aligned.[71] Thus, fewer misunderstandings—events where active coordination is called for—take place. Fourth, repeated interactions permit organizations to institu-

69 Jones et al. 1997.

70 Powell 1990, p. 305.

71 Of course, frequent interactions can in theory also mean frequent opportunities to relish and increase reciprocal animosities. In that case, however, it is safe to assume that the network would break apart or dilute at this point, and no further network governance would occur.

tionalize or formalize their relationship in a certain way, i.e., by developing communication protocols or developing work routines.[72] Such formalization amounts to an impersonalization of coordination akin to how a good deal of coordination is achieved within (hierarchical) organizations.

Organizational culture is another coordinating mechanism, for it provides "broad, tacitly understood rules for appropriate action under unspecified circumstances."[73] Organizational culture is arguably a more amorphous concept than access restriction, for example, especially because different authors define it more or less broadly. Here, organizational culture is understood first and foremost as "ideas [and] values … that are specific to a given organization and have special relevance to its members."[74] Organizational culture then also exemplifies trade-offs between values, for example, consensus versus efficiency or quality versus cost.

According to Camerer and Vepsalainen, organizational culture becomes manifest to employees via focal principles (for example, "the customer is king," "client first," or, in the case of many humanitarian organizations, "impartiality").[75] These principles can be articulated in a number of ways, from employment contracts to mission statements to prominently displayed slogans etc. Somewhat more subtly, visibility may also be aided by "war-stories" that are transmitted through the organization and that recount the application of one such principle by an employee. Thus, "a myth, a ritual, or other symbol … directs individual action in collective endeavor toward common goals."[76] Needless to say, for such symbols to create a distinctive organizational culture, they need to be consistent with one another, and they need to be enacted in a way that is consistent over time.

Organizational culture facilitates coordination because it is embodied in routines that describe "the way things are done around here" to all employees. If internalized, this means that employees will have a shared understanding of the conventions in the organization, and their assumptions, expectations, predic-

72 Van de Ven 1976; Ring and Van de Ven 1994; Vlaar et al. 2006.

73 Camerer and Vepsalainen 1988, p. 115.

74 Rodrigues 2006, p. 538; See also Kogut and Zander 1996.

75 Camerer and Vepsalainen 1988.

76 Dandridge et al. 1980, p. 78.

tions, and evaluations of other employees' actions are more likely to be correct. Furthermore, "it becomes possible to rapidly share information, interpret the meaning of events in and outside the organization in similar ways, and see opportunities for local action in the interest of the global good."[77]

The same can, albeit perhaps to a lesser extent, work across organizations—i.e., in a network. Snow et al. assert: "Networks operate efficiently when member firms voluntarily behave as if they are all part of a broader organization sharing common objectives and rewards. … The network must somehow create an organization "culture" that transcends ownership,"[78] that is, organizations in a network must share the same values and ideas as well as the prioritization among them. These values could then translate into the same or at least similar (explicit or implicit) rules of behavior and performance criteria. Thus, Lawler holds that, "when a common set of values can be defined, self-managing units can focus on goals and performance results that are consistent with those values."[79]

Cultures become assimilated, or a shared culture develops, when employees interact frequently with one another or when there is occupational exchange between employees of different organizations, lateral promotion, and the like. Gulati describes this as follows: "Actors who are strongly tied to each other are likely to develop a shared understanding of the utility of certain behaviors as a result of discussing opinions in strong, socializing relations, which in turn influence their actions."[80] "Acculturation" is also furthered when norms, rules, and understandings of a particular profession (like doctors, lawyers, humanitarian workers, etc.) are articulated and construed by independent "authorities" such as a professional school, a union, a lobbying group, or a prominent leader. Shared cultures, therefore, "evolve out of long-term repeated transactions but … are sustained by an institutional infrastructure."[81] They help to coordinate the actions of different organizations.

77 Hedlund 1988, p. 25.
78 Snow et al. 1992, p. 18.
79 Lawler 1988, p. 11.
80 Gulati 1998, p. 296.
81 Jones et al. 1997, p. 930.

Reputation is information about an organization conveyed to other network members regarding its character, skills, and reliability.[82] Behavior and performance which are consistent over time give an organization a reputation, for example, for speedy execution of tasks or for good quality of products. (Negative reputations are of course also possible.) Reputation can relay information about one organization to members of another organization without the two having actually made contact. Thus, under conditions of uncertainty, reputation allows one organization to at least partially forecast the other organization's behavior. Based on this information, one organization might decide whether to work on a joint project with the other organization, whether to transmit information, or whether to take information received from them at face value.

Because each organization is aware that others behave like this, it has an interest in having and maintaining a good reputation. This in turn discourages organizations from seeking short-term gains at the expense of other network members. Ring and Van de Ven explain that, because networks operate with a significant shadow of the future, reputation safeguards exchanges because participating organizations have an interest in having good reputations.[83] Equally, Jarillo states: "The entrepreneur … will behave correctly because, even if in this particular circumstance he or she could gain from opportunistic behavior, such behavior would destroy his or her reputation, thus making the total outcome of the opportunistic behavior undesirable."[84]

Furthermore, because organizations are aware of their interdependence with other organizations, they also have an interest in detecting and verifying the reputation of others, and disseminating the relevant information throughout the network. A reputation for opportunistic behavior, for instance, can quickly spill over from one organization onto the next, when a perceived lack of corrective behavior marks the organizations as "accomplices." Therefore, when the gains to be had from network membership are appreciated by its members, information about reputation should be relayed throughout the network.

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82 Jones et al. 1997, p.932.

83 Ring and Van de Ven 1992, p. 489.

84 Jarillo 1988, p. 37.

It is easy to see that without the potential for sanctions, reputation as such is of little relevance. Jones et al. hold that *collective sanctions* mean that network members punish those that do not behave according to shared norms and goals; sanctions can range from "gossip and rumors to ostracism and sabotage."[85] Baum and Ingram also find that "competitive firms within a dense network … quickly establish norms of cooperation because firms trust that the well organized network will facilitate collective monitoring and sanctioning, producing an effective incentive for cooperation."[86]

In a network, corresponding to the relevant information disseminated concerning organizations' reputations, collective sanctioning may be supported by a meta-norm—namely, one specifying that those network partners who have detected opportunistic behavior in others, but fail to relay this to the rest of the group ought to be sanctioned as well. In this way, collective sanctions safeguard exchanges, because they "define and reinforce parameters of acceptable behavior."[87]

In this model, access restriction, culture, reputation and sanctions are described as the main elements of social control in network governance. It should be noted that these constitutive mechanisms are mutually reinforcing: for example, restricted access engenders repeated interaction of those who are in the network. This, in turn, contributes to the development of a shared culture. It also means that individual organizations seek to build a good reputation, and that collective sanctioning will occur if values and norms are breached. The flipside of this is that there exists some degree of interdependence between the social control mechanisms; thus network governance cannot be achieved by one mechanism alone. For example, one could argue that a shared culture is necessary for making reputation intelligible—that is, network members must regard certain norms with at least similar levels of esteem in order for reputation to be meaningful and, if necessary, for sanctions to be initiated. Network governance via social control is most effective when the mechanisms are applied in concert.

85 Jones et al. 1997, p. 931.

86 Baum and Ingram 2002, p. 25.

87 Jones et al. 1997, pp. 931 f.

Network Governance: Structural Elements

So far, network governance as described has said nothing about the make-up or structure of a network. At first this may appear strange, especially if one keeps in mind that, within a hierarchy, coordination is so explicitly linked to questions of structure: Who has authority over whom? Who gives orders and who follows them? Who is responsible for the fulfillment of some particular task, and who is responsible for another? Who reports to whom, and in what way?

As seen in the preceding sections, for the social control mechanisms in networks, these questions are not of primary importance. Networks generally operate on notions of parity, not hierarchy. However, it has been noted that, sometimes in networks, a "hierarchical element" can be introduced to enhance efficiency.[88] Accordingly, Sydow and Windeler assert that "although rather decentralized, somewhat polycentric and a possible outcome of collective strategies, an interorganizational network may well be strategically led by some focal or 'hub' organization."[89] In a similar vein, Litwak and Hylton introduce the concept of the coordinating agency, a "formal organization whose major purpose is to order behavior between two or more other formal organizations by communicating pertinent information …, by adjudicating areas of dispute …, by providing standards of behavior …, by promoting areas of common interest …, and so forth".[90]

Litwak and Hylton's account is noteworthy because the authors identify certain conditions for the preponderance of coordinating agencies: (1) organizational interdependence, (2) awareness of this interdependence, and (3) standardization of the units to be coordinated. These conditions are deemed to be prerequisites in order for coordinating agencies to develop and for which they must strive. The authors assert that, first, coordination would not be necessary if there were no interdependence between organizations. If the actions of one organization had no effects on the opportunities and constraints facing another, and vice-versa, neither would have to take the other into account. Second, because of the absence of hierarchy, coordination would also be extremely difficult if this interdependence and the resulting need to coordinate

88 Whetten 1981.

89 Sydow and Windeler 1998, p. 267.

90 Litwak and Hylton 1962, p. 399.

were not recognized by the parties concerned. And third, coordination between two entities could not be carried out by a third entity if there were not some measure of standardization of that which is supposed to be coordinated. "In order for a coordinating agency to operate efficiently, it must develop specialists. For such specialists to develop, however, the behavior to be coordinated has to be standard in character."[91] The implication of this is that coordinating agencies in networks cannot be in charge of managing and coordinating everything. Only those instances which occur repeatedly and where the process can be standardized at least to some extent can be subject to coordination by designated agencies.

Litwak and Hylton maintain that the need for these conditions to be met is something that is unique for networks. In contrast, it is not at all critical for the establishment of coordinating mechanisms within hierarchies. Thus, according to the authors, one would find in intra-organizational analysis (i.e., within one organization) that

> the leadership might institute coordinating mechanisms because they are aware of interdependence where units to be coordinated are unaware of this; or they might introduce coordinating mechanisms not to increase efficiency of the organization but to perpetuate their own authority structure; or they might introduce coordinating mechanisms despite lack of standardization because they feel this might speed up the process of standardization.[92]

With this counterfactual example, the authors again illustrate how coordination in a network is different from coordination in a hierarchy—even if one inserts "hierarchical elements" like coordinating agencies.[93] They show that in a

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91 Ibid., p. 412.

92 Ibid., p. 400.

93 Reiß also emphasizes the noteworthiness of coordinating agencies/coordinators in networks: "Der extensive Rückgriff auf Koordinatoren bzw. Integratoren im Netzwerkmanagement muß (zunächst) verwundern. Hierbei handelt es sich nämlich nicht um ein netzwerk-typisches Integrationsinstrument. Der Einsatz von Koordinatoren induziert tendenziell zentralistisch-sternförmige Strukturen und zeichnet sich durch eine fremdorganisatorisch-bürokratische Einfärbung ('Netzwerk-Overhead') aus. Netzwerke hingegen stehen im Zeichen der dezentralen Selbstorganisation, lateralen Kommunikation und sind nicht hierarchisch, sondern heterarchisch konstruiert." (Reiß, 2000, p. 224). "*The extensive reliance on coordinating agencies or coordinators is initially somewhat surprising. In this case we are not referring to a network-typical integration instrument. The use of coordinators has a tendency to produce centralist-radial structures with an external-organization-like or bureaucratic character ('network overhead'). Networks, to the contrary, signify decentralized self-organization and lateral*

network, the authority of one organization over others requires permissive conditions, and that authority must be voluntarily granted and recognized.[94] Authority merely by virtue of being "above" someone else is not sufficient.[95]

Park and Ungson agree that the institutionalization of what they call "a proper governance mechanism" cannot be forced upon network members. Because organizations forego some of their independence when they set up such governance mechanisms, Park and Ungson believe that the only relevant incentive to do so is the belief that such action would lead to "sufficient economic gains."[96]

Not only are the prerequisites for establishing dedicated coordinators different in networks than they are in hierarchies, the measures which these coordinators have at their disposal are different, too. That is, given that the absence of hierarchy means that a coordinating agency can probably apply sanctioning mechanisms only to a limited extent (relying on other organizations and collective sanctions for more severe measures); it must focus primarily on creating incentives for other organizations to be coordinated. Network management must be "facilitative, not directive."[97] According to Litwak and Hylton, coordinating agencies communicate, adjudicate, provide information, and promote common areas of interest—but how do they become effective in doing so?

Most authors here agree on the underlying logic; the argumentation is roughly thus:[98] A central organization[99] has a privileged position vis-à-vis other organizations in the network. Central organizations have established more links to other organizations in the network than any single one of them has individually. As a result, they can serve as communication channels and "provide

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communication; *they are not hierarchically organized, but heterarchically constructed"* (author's translation).

94 See also, Boje and Whetten 1981.

95 Apart from consent of network members, Whetten envisions an outside authority source such as the state or federal government as the designer of a coordinating agency. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that, in order for it to work effectively, such an agency needs as well the consent of other network members. See Whetten 1981, p. 101.

96 Park and Ungson 2001, p. 47.

97 Ruggie 2003.

98 See, for example, Wren 1967; Whetten 1981; Astley and Sachdeva 1984; Kogut and Zander 1996; Sydow and Windeler 1998.

99 The terms "central," "focal," "hub," or "linking pin organization" are used interchangeably in the literature.

services that link third parties to one another by transferring resources, information, or clients."[100] Because such functions are most effectively and efficiently carried out by a central organization, this organization gains status vis-à-vis the others in the network and becomes a "primus inter pares", a first among equals. This status is reinforced because the central organization can then use its privileged position to exert influence upon the network itself; it has, for example, some degree of discretion with regards to what information is passed on and to whom. It can also serve as a role model for other organizations to imitate. Or it can engage actively in the setting of standards and assigning of roles within the network. To sum up, the central organization becomes "strongly involved in the process in which the symbols, interpretive schemes, knowledge, norms, understanding and ways of doing business are reproduced."[101] In the eyes of network members, standards for management and evaluation then appear less arbitrary than such standards sometimes do in hierarchies—another reason why members of a network might willingly subscribe to the directions of the coordinating agencies.[102] In reality, a central organization actively shapes network culture, i.e., "the way things are done around here" and, in so doing, it can further consolidate its own predominance in a network. All in all, centrality entails mutually reinforcing asymmetries in a network.

It is important to reiterate that, despite this structural advantage, the central organization must rely on so-called "soft powers" for network governance, i.e., mediating between different organizations rather than passing out orders.[103] Wren, for example, asserts: "Persuasion, negotiation, and exchange of information are the key to integration. Information exchange rather than authority can solve the problems of interorganizational coordination."[104]

In general, authors agree that centrally coordinated networks work more smoothly than networks which do not have a central, coordinating body. What is more, especially in the social sector, it has been demonstrated that centralized networks are also more effective, i.e., they are better at what they do than their

100 Whetten 1981, p. 10.

101 Sydow and Windeler 1998, p. 267.

102 Sauer and Döhl speak of "Versachlichung und Ojektivierung von Herrschaft." See Sauer and Döhl 1994.

103 Wren 1967.

104 Wren 1967, p. 80.

non-centralized counterparts.[105] It must not be forgotten, however, that a coordinating agency must fulfill certain requirements, and that the proposed scope must suit tasks and circumstances.

Synthesis: Key Aspects of Interorganizational Coordination

It has been shown above that, when trying to build a theoretic reference for coordination of UN agencies in peacebuilding, one best looks to organization theory, and in particular to network theory. Although arguably not (yet) a fully cohesive theory per se, the general themes of network theory go a long way towards illuminating questions of interorganizational coordination.

A basic distinction can be drawn between what are called social control elements and structural control elements. One could say that the social control elements are those that are idiosyncratic to the network. The structural control mechanisms, on the other hand, bring a hierarchical element to the network, but not without its having to change its character on the way.

Treatises on social control mechanisms take assumed parity among network members as a starting point and explain how, in the absence of hierarchy, coordination and monitoring can nevertheless take place. Here, social control mechanisms like access restriction, culture, reputation, and sanctions play key roles. They work well together in that they mutually reinforce one another.

The introduction of a dedicated coordinating agency within a network is one kind of structural control mechanism. In most cases, organizations gain this status (coordinating agency) by virtue of their position in the network, i.e., the number of ties they maintain to other organizations. Because a coordinating agency can sanction other organizations only to a limited extent compared to the sanctioning possible in a hierarchy, it must use mainly discursive means to facilitate coordination in the network. Whenever this has been possible, it has been observed that central networks function more efficiently and in some cases even more effectively than networks which do not have this feature.[106]

Social and structural control mechanisms are in no way contradictory—on the contrary, they, too, mutually reinforce each other. If the social control

105 Alter and Hage 1993; Provan and Milward 1995.

106 Alter and Hage 1993 and Provan and Milward 1995.

mechanisms are well established within a network, these are the ones a coordinating agency can play on and augment. For example, it can utilize a shared culture to propagate criteria according to which new network members are welcomed. If done prudently, the coordinating agency thereby strengthens its own position as well as the culture of the network. Together, social and structural control mechanisms make up the solution space in which network governance can occur.

A PEACEBUILDING NETWORK?

Looking at the UN peacebuilding machinery through a network lens, two broad propositions emerge:

- First, although, out of the three ideal organization forms, the collective of UN departments, funds, agencies, and programs looks most like a network; there are significant deficits vis-à-vis such an ideal form. This means that some prerequisites for establishing network governance are, in this case, fulfilled only to a suboptimal extent.
- Second, considering the fact that coordination in UN peacebuilding should function according to the network model, too few efforts have been directed towards strengthening social control mechanisms and enabling network centrality. Instead, too much energy has gone into trying to solve the coordination problem by introducing ever new coordination structures.

Neither proposition can be investigated in exhaustive detail here, but their plausibility will nevertheless be validated by illustrating at least one example per proposition. If these examples support the overall propositions in a general way, more detailed and exhaustive studies are indeed warranted.

Insufficient Development of Network Characteristics in UN Peacebuilding

Although it has been noted previously that the collective of UN agencies, funds, and programmes comes most closely to a network from a structural perspective, it must be acknowledged that the resemblance to an ideal network is still weak in some aspects. Most importantly, there is too much overlap between the different UN organizations in terms of their organizational mandate, their core activities, and their capabilities. In other words, constituting organizations focus too little on identifying and developing core strengths and comparative advan-

tages; instead, they have branched out significantly since their founding, and many now occupy the same or very similar spaces.

The results of the Capacity Inventory in United Nations Peacebuilding, initiated at the Secretariat in 2005, and the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, set up in 2006, make this case very vivid. As mentioned above, the capacity inventory groups peacebuilding activities into four broad categories: (1) security and public order, (2) justice and reconciliation, (3) governance and participation, and (4) socioeconomic well-being. A level below that, 22 issue areas that come into play in peacebuilding are identified; for each of these, there are usually between two and seven different entities which have a major stake in program formulation and execution.[107] This means that at least two, but up to seven organizations of the UN system do the same (or similar) things in a particular programmatic area in peacebuilding. Similarly, the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence notes in its final report that "more than 30 UN agencies and programmes have a stake in environmental management."[108]

Interview partners at the United Nations lamented the same conditions. Several, for example, highlighted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had somewhat neglected its original mandate of economic development and was "chasing the trend" of becoming active in post-conflict countries in areas such as governance and supporting the rule of law. One observer said that "UNDP basically does everything, but they don't have a comparative advantage in everything." Conversely, others asserted that UNICEF, for example, was a more effective organization than UNDP because it had a narrower mandate and had been able to build up expertise accordingly.

This programmatic overlap among UN entities in many areas means that they often compete rather than cooperate or coordinate and, at the same time, they can deny responsibility for outcomes. With many players involved, it is very difficult to make out who is responsible for what outcome. The High-level Panel thus asserts that "even when mandates intersect, UN entities tend to operate alone with little synergy and coordination between them," and it laments the "proliferation of agencies, mandates and offices, creating duplication

107 United Nations Capacities in Peacebuilding 2006.

108 High-level Panel und System-wide Coherence 2006, p. 10

and dulling the focus on outcomes, with moribund entities never discontinued."[109]

The findings of the High-level Panel report also point to the fact that information and resource flow among UN agencies leaves something to be desired. While some see non-corresponding information technology (IT) solutions as a reason why the information flow is hampered,[110] one of the authors of the Peacebuilding Capacity Inventory puts it bluntly thus: "The UN is very bad at knowing what [kind of capacities] it actually has." Another observer noted that "you end up with numerous silos with very little connective tissue"—too many staff at the UN think mostly in terms of their own organization or their own department, with too little effort being made to seek information and reach out to others for exchange and collaboration. Chesterman recounts his time in Bosnia, reporting that "in 2000, there were 16 UN agencies that were all technically being coordinated by the UN, but a survey had to be sent out to ask the different agencies what they were actually doing there." Similarly, one former Resident Coordinator in Kosovo noted: "In the beginning, duplication happens. After three years, that is over, because agencies know what they are doing respectively."[111] Although reported with a positive outlook—viz., once agencies know what everyone is doing, duplication is avoided—the fact that this can take three years is alarming. Finally, Eide et al. recount another example from the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):

> A high profile effort to create a Joint Mission Assessment Cell (JMAC) in the DRC mission failed to include any UN agency representation, and was open only to mission personnel. When asked about the lack of UN agency representation in the JMAC, one official remarked that he had never thought about it. … [The] DRC in this regard reflected a lack of awareness about the full capacities of the UN system in country, and a lack of "automaticity" about engaging the wider system.[112]

Obviously, such disregard can have detrimental effects—a "mere" duplication of efforts is perhaps the least severe drawback. More alarming are reflections concerning, for example, inadequate information flow which can mean that

109 High Level Panel on System-wide Coherence 2006, p. 9.

110 Von der Schulenburg 2005, p. 29.

111 Author's interview.

112 Eide et al. 2005, p. 28.

programs are run by agencies that are not suited for the job; or entities of the UN system engaged in the same peacebuilding mission which may actually work at cross purposes. One practitioner here notes: "Very often, capacities were not only poorly coordinated, but they are contradicting each other. You might have a situation where the UN is trying to build capacity of a local government by setting up a trust fund to pay civil servants' salaries, and at the same time the government is under fiscal austerity measures from the IMF."[113] Such inconsistencies quickly erode the credibility of the UN in the eyes of the local population, especially because, in most cases, they view the international presence as "the UN" or "the internationals" and therefore have even less tolerance for mixed messages.

Lastly, as Hedlund observed, managing a network and managing an organization in a network demands particular qualities of employees.[114] Compared to hierarchies, a network needs more proactive rather than reactive staff, more innovators and not only executors, and people who, in addition to a loyalty to their own organization, act in accordance with the welfare of the entire network.

In the context of UN peacebuilding, it has been noted repeatedly that these qualities are especially necessary for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Griffin, for example, asserts that "successful coordination between conflict management and development practitioners depends greatly on the personnel at the helm,"[115] and, according to Chesterman, "Brahimi is the reason why Afghanistan didn't collapse in a heap."[116] Stockton asserts that the SRSG needs to have a "combination of luck, charisma, a compelling argument, and brilliant communications" to fulfill his role.[117]

Most commentators agree, however, that it is by no means given that the SRSG actually has these qualities (even though steps in the right direction have been undertaken at the UN to assemble a pool of suitable senior leadership figures). The overall situation arguably does not look particularly favorable. In

113 Author's interview.

114 Hedlund 1986.

115 Griffin 2003.

116 Author's interview.

117 Stockton 2002, p. 37.

2002, the Secretary-General noted in his report, "Strengthening the United Nations—An Agenda for Further Change," that "to attract and retain younger people we must transform the Organization's management culture—traditionally hierarchical and rigid—to one that stimulates new ideas and the vigorous exchange of views, irrespective of grade, seniority and tenure."[118] But the 2006 management reform report still notes that the organization has an outdated human resources management framework—one that was designed for a stable headquarters-based organization, but which remains in place for an organization that has over half of its staff in the field. The report also notes that too many staff turn away from the United Nations, frustrated by the lack of career opportunities and excessive bureaucracy.[119] Current policies therefore obstruct rather than support the recruitment, training, and promotion of staff needed for network management.

Neglect of Social Control Mechanisms

In addition to the underdevelopment of ideal network characteristics and prerequisites for network governance, the social control mechanisms of network governance have also received too little attention in attempts to improve interorganizational coordination at the UN. This is probably true for all of the social control mechanisms explained above. In line with the proposed way of probing the assertions made above, the case of a shared culture (or lack thereof) has been selected to exemplify this point.

The significance of a shared culture has been explained extensively with regards to network governance, but shared values, norms, and practices are also seen as important by practitioners and scholars of peacebuilding.[120] Unfortunately, however, considerable cultural differences exist within the UN system, and they do so at several levels.

The fact that different agencies, funds, and programs and even departments within the Secretariat have their own distinct culture is often acknowledged. This became apparent, as well, with the account of insufficient information flow made above. It should therefore suffice to reiterate at this point that

118 A/57/387 of 9 September 2002, § 185.

119 A/60692 of 7 March 2006, §§ 20-24.

120 See, for example, Stedman 1997; Haas 2002; author's interviews.

separate governance structures, reporting lines (Security Council, General Assembly, or Economic and Social Council), mandates, and staff rules result in and comprise distinct organizational cultures for the respective UN entities.[121] Whereas originally this individuality and diversity helped to bolster agencies' independence from political wrangling and let each agency build up staff rules that would best serve its needs, this now often prevents those agencies from coordinating their approaches. One reason for this, according to Haas, is that every organization is interested first and foremost in self-preservation; working towards a common goal is only a secondary or tertiary priority. The focus on organizational survival, however, leads to selective perception; each organization interprets reality in such a way as to define a task for itself: "he who works mainly with a hammer sees nails everywhere." Obviously, such selective perception and interpretation can lead to extensive communication and cooperation problems.[122]

In addition to these rather general observations, at least two additional dimensions at which cultural differences exist and which have important consequences for coordination in peacebuilding can be made out: the headquarters (HQ)-field dimension and the mission-country team dimension.

With regards to the HQ-field dimension, it is commonly asserted that headquarters staff has a more political outlook and field staff a more operational outlook. This plays out in various ways. First, one could assume that in general, HQ personnel are concerned more with the political processes in peacebuilding, i.e., empowering and disempowering certain political factions, and navigating or shaping neighboring and big power interests. In the field, especially at the outset of peacebuilding missions where there are often important humanitarian concerns, field staff can be assumed to have a more "practical" outlook, i.e., delivering food aid, running refugee camps and facilitating return of refugees, reconstructing infrastructure, and so on. This division of labor— crudely speaking, doing politics at headquarters and conducting operations in the field— probably even makes sense to some extent, and it can certainly not be entirely

121 For a more detailed account, see, for example, "Investing in the United Nations—For a Stronger Organization Worldwide," Report of the Secretary-General, A/60/692, 7 March 2006.

122 Haas 2002.

reversed. However, it does entail a certain self-selection among staff and, without much exchange, it contributes to a disconnect between the two levels. This seems to be further exacerbated by current human resources policies. For example, although field experience is generally viewed as a must-have in the UN system, too much field experience may actually be detrimental for a career moving up the bureaucratic ranks: "Good field operators do not have a lot of traction at HQ in terms of setting policy."[123] Therefore, those who earnestly pursue a UN career make sure that they do not remain in the field for too long, for fear of falling out of the loop or not being at the right place at the right time. This specialization means that the respective sides do not take each other adequately into account. Accordingly, field staff often complain that HQ sets policies which are ill-suited to the situation on the ground, and HQ accuses field staff of failing to see the big picture.

A somewhat related difference is said to exist within the UN field presence, namely between the UN mission and the UN Country Team (UNCT). Although this is often not made clear in the literature, the UN usually maintains at least these two institutional set-ups in complex peace operations. The Country Team encompasses the collection of UN humanitarian and development agencies active in a country. It is headed by a Resident Coordinator, who is normally the head of the UNDP presence in the country ("Resident Representative"). The UNCT is distinct from the mission in the sense that, in most cases, humanitarian and development agencies have presences in countries long before a UN mission (authorized by the Security Council normally under Chapter VII of the UN Charter) arrives. In Afghanistan, for example, these agencies had continued to operate all throughout the Taliban period, even though they had to temporarily relocate their headquarters to Islamabad, Pakistan. The UNCT is also the presence which is most likely to remain in a country after a mission has been withdrawn. UNCT personnel therefore claim that they know the local situation much better than mission staff; they generally also tread more carefully vis-à-vis local factions because, to some extent, UNCTs depend on such local groups in order to be able to carry out their work in the future. The mission, on the other hand, nowadays comes with a robust military component and is injected into a country with its own elaborate support structures. The aim here

123 Author's interview.

is to get the mission "up and running" as soon as possible and therefore to minimize local dependencies. The discrepancies between the aims and approaches of the UNTC and those of the mission can have detrimental effects on UN-wide coordination. One practitioner noted: "Some coordination problems are actually at the level of organizational psychology. There is an element where the UN Country Team is extremely suspicious of the mission, which they perceive comes in from outer space. The mission, on the other hand, has no incentive to coordinate, because it is entirely self-contained."[124] In Kosovo, UNCT members and a former Resident Coordinator noted that they had an extremely difficult time gaining access to the mission until the appointment of Søren Jessen-Petersen in June 2004.(Jessen-Petersen was extensively familiar with the UN system, having served both as Assistant High Commissioner of Refugees at the UNHCR in Geneva and as Director of the UNHCR's Liaison office at UN Headquarters in New York.) The mission-country team disconnect is supposed to be minimized by the integrated mission concept, whereby the Country Team is supposed to be incorporated into the mission by making the Resident Coordinator also one of the two Deputy Special Representatives (DSRSG) of the mission. Nevertheless, the 2005 report on Integrated Missions reads thus:

> In almost all cases, members of the UNCT held that they were not involved in the planning of the new mission to the degree they would like. A large number of field staff felt that mission planners had created structures from preconceived and mostly inappropriate templates. Mission planners are often seen as being oblivious to the experience, capacity and mandate of other UN actors.[125]

It can be seen, therefore, that problems of miscommunication and competition that result from different organizational cultures can persist despite structural adjustments such as designating the SRSG as the leader of the entire UN effort in a particular country.

Convoluted Structural Mechanisms

As explained previously, network governance through social control mechanisms can be aided by structural elements, namely, by inserting a hierarchy-like

124 Author's interview.

125 Eide et al. 2005, p. 19.

constituent—a central or focal organization—as the main arbiter of information and perhaps even other resources. Thus, even though a network relies mainly on the social control mechanisms outlined above for coordination, structural arrangements can also become important: they can make a network run more efficiently and, by facilitating directed information and resource flow, they can also make a network run more effectively. A combination of social control elements and structural elements seems to be the ideal solution.

An argument of this paper is that, in accordance with this proposed remedy, the UN has so far concentrated too much on structural mechanisms and too little on social control elements. Eide et al. assert, too, that "integration is at least as much about process as it is about structures,"[126] but find that, so far, the UN has focused too much about structures of missions.[127] The focus on structural mechanisms seems to have had two effects: one, there are too many structural coordination mechanisms and, two, they do not function properly. To the contrary, the coordination costs they entail in terms of occupying people's time and energy sometimes seem to become noticeably high.[128] Jones, for example labels interagency coordination mechanisms at the UN "labyrinthine" and "Kafkaesque," [129] and Cutillo, too, finds the proliferation of coordination mechanisms problematic.

> What makes coordination in the post-conflict context particularly complex is the coexistence of political, humanitarian, and development actors and mechanisms. Just as an example, while for humanitarian purposes the main coordination bodies are the IASC[130] and the ECHA[131], for development activities it is the UN Development Group (UNDG) chaired by UNDP. Symmetrically, while the CAP is the main document prepared by the UN system to define assistance needs and funding requests in humanitarian situations, in "ordinary" development situations the system produces other documents, such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). Parallel coordination mechanisms operate on the ground.[132]

126 Eide et al. 2005, p. 10.

127 Eide et al. 2005.

128 Pouligny 2005, p. 500.

129 Jones in Donini et al. 2004, p. 217.

130 Inter-Agency Standing Committee

131 Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs

132 Cutillo 2006, pp. 24-25.

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

This paper has presented a case for fresh thinking on coordination in UN peacebuilding, and it has argued that to look at organization theory could be a fruitful endeavor for informing the current debate. A consistent model of the concept of coordination as treated in the theory has been developed, where coordination has first been related to its respective organization forms—hierarchies, markets and networks—and then developed further in its most appropriate manifestation, namely, network governance. Network governance has been shown to rely primarily on social control mechanisms but to be enhanced by network centrality—a structural element.

By applying insights from network theory to UN peacebuilding, it has been shown that deficits at the UN exist on several different levels but particularly at the level of the development of network characteristics as prerequisites for network governance and at the level of network governance itself. Examples have been recounted to support this view. In order to improve interorganizational coordination at the UN, therefore, a number of efforts might be considered. For example, programmatic overlap could be reduced and, in that way, the system could be brought closer to an ideal network form. Greater focus should also be given to designing processes in such a way that social control mechanisms can function better, for example, in the areas of communication and human resources policies. Furthermore, rather than introducing ever more coordination structures, the structural landscape should be simplified, and complementary central organizations/bodies in the field and at Headquarters should be established. Coordination at the UN will probably always remain a challenge, but it has been shown that organization theory can aid detailed analysis on where the problems lie as well as offer some ideas which should help to tackle them.

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